



REMARKS

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Claims 1-20 are currently pending. The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-20 under 35 USC §102(e) as being clearly anticipated by West, et al. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-20, as amended herein, are patentable over the cited prior art.

The present invention teaches and claims a system and method for multicasting a user request/query to a plurality of agents for information gathering. Based on user-entered preferential destination information, more than one agent is determined as a destination for the multicast request. The user does not specify a single destination, but issues a request with preferential destination information and the system/method performs the determination and multicasting to determined destinations.

In contrast, the West patent is directed to a method and system for choosing a communication access method and access number for a remote computer to access a single identified destination, either a single specific local computer or a single specific local area network. West discloses software for determining an access path and the cost of accessing along the path in order to connect the one computer to the identified one address/destination (computer or network) in the least expensive manner:



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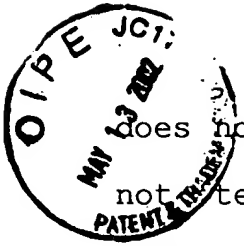
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The West patent is not directed to multicasting a request for information. Rather, West seeks only to connect one computer to one user-specified destination. Furthermore, a user in the West system does not enter preferential destination information for multicasting a plurality of request for information to a plurality of destinations/agents. Rather, the West user simply identifies the exact destination and the West software determines the best and cheapest way to connect the user computer to that exact single destination.

Applicants respectfully note that the West patent effectively teaches away from multicasting a message, since to do so would incur multiple expenses, when the stated aim of the West patent is to connect the user computer to its destination in the least expensive manner.

What is explicitly set forth in all of the pending claims, as amended, is a system, device and method for performing steps of multicasting a user request to more than one destination agent, by receiving a packet or message, determining which multiple agents are to receive the packet or message, said determining being based on preferential destination information or a messaging policy, and sending the packet or message to the determined destinations.

It is well established under U.S. Patent Law that, for a reference to anticipate claims under 35 USC § 102, the reference must teach each and every claim feature. Since the West patent
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does not teach the multicasting of a packet or message and does not teach the receipt or use of preferential destination information (or a messaging policy) for determining more than one agent as a destination agent, it cannot be maintained that West anticipates the invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 10, 15, 19 and 20. Furthermore, Applicants assert that a reference which does not anticipate the independent claims cannot be said to anticipate those claims which depend from the independent claims and which add limitations thereto. Therefore, the language of Claims 2-9, 11-14, and 16-18 is not anticipated by the West patent. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the anticipation rejections.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants request entry of the amendments, withdrawal of the rejections, and issuance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

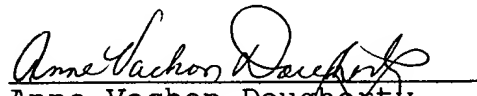
Y. Nakamura, et al

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MARKED-UP CLAIMS WITH AMENDMENTS SHOWN

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1. A method for multicasting a message to more than one of a plurality of agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a packet comprising a message and preferential destination information designated by a user;

determining to which of said plurality of agents said message is to be sent, by referring to said preferential destination information; and

sending said message to [the] more than one of said plurality of agents determined as destinations.

10. A computer comprising:

an execution environment for a plurality of agents; and

a message monitor for receiving a packet, comprising a message and preferential destination information designated by a user, from an agent being active in the execution environment for said agents, and for determining to which of said plurality of agents [agent] said message is to be sent by referring to said preferential destination information, and for [sending] multicasting said messages to [the] more than one of said plurality of agents determined as destination agents.

15. A storage medium for storing a program executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform method steps for
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multicasting a message to more than one of a plurality of agents
said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a packet comprising a message and preferential
destination information designated by a user;

determining to which of said plurality of agents said
message is to be sent, by referring to said preferential
destination information; and

sending said message to [the] more than one of said
plurality of agents determined as destinations.

19. A method for multicasting a message to more than one of
a plurality of agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a message;

determining to which of said plurality of agents said
message is to be sent, by referring to a messaging policy data
defining priorities of agents to which said message can be sent;
and

sending said message to [the] more than one of said
plurality of agents determined as destinations.

20. A storage medium for storing a program for causing a
machine to execute the steps of a method for multicasting a
message to [an] more than one of a plurality of agents [agent],
said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a message;

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...ing to which of said plurality of agents said
message is to be sent, by referring to a messaging policy data
defining priorities of agents to which said message can be sent;
and

sending said message to [the] more than one of said
plurality of agents determined as destinations.

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